

Activities of InterAction Members in The DPR North Korea May 1999

News and Press Release

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A Guide to Advocacy, Development and Humanitarian Efforts of InterAction Member Agencies

Produced by the Disaster Response Unit of InterAction ®

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All of the NGOs in this guide are members of InterAction, a coalition of over 150 humanitarian, relief, development, and refugee organizations working in 160 nations. As such, they subscribe to institutional, ethical and practical standards that promote effectiveness and accountability.

Report Summary

This guide offers international agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the media, and the public an overview of the humanitarian assistance being provided to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) by InterAction member agencies.

Eleven InterAction members currently conduct relief and development operations in the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea. Seven sector areas are addressed in programming including agriculture and food production, citizen exchange, cooperatives, education and training, health care, material aid, and nutrition. Please see page 3 to view organizations listed by sector activity.

The NGOs in this report have presented several objectives for their North Korea programs. These include: providing general humanitarian relief; promoting food security; modernizing the agricultural sector via new techniques including double-cropping; rehabilitating the industrial sector; improving health care; increasing awareness in the US as to the magnitude of the DPRK famine; and encouraging greater economic interaction. Severe and pervasive malnutrition, especially among children was noted as a significant concern to be addressed in the overall relief effort.

NGOs have provided a variety of material inputs. These include: Foods: Canned Beef, Cereals, Milled Flour, Rice; Cooking oil; Clothing: Children's Winter Clothing, Overcoats , Sweaters, Winter Work Clothing; Seeds and Agricultural Inputs: Barley, Corn, Green Bean, Potato, Radish, Soybean, and Wheat; Fruit Trees; Fertilizers; Herbicide, Insecticide, Sprayers; Medical: First-Aid Materials, Hygiene Kits, Medicines; and Other: Blankets, Diapers, Laboratory Equipment, Plastic Sheeting, and Quilts.

NGOs specifically described five provinces in the DPRK in which they focus their activities, including Kangwon Province, North Hamyong Province, South Hamyong Province, North Pyonyan Province, South Pyonyan Province.

Several NGOs work in coordination with local and international partners. Those mentioned are: Canadian Foodgrains Banks, Caritas Hong Kong, DPRK Flood Rehabilitation Committee, DPRK Red Cross, FAO, Korean Christian Federation, OCHA

UNDP, UNICEF, World Food Program. The InterAction DPRK Working Group, and the US PVO Consortium address relief and development issues and NGO concerns on a regular basis.

Organizations by Sector Activity

Agriculture and Food Production

American Friends Service Committee

CARE

Catholic Relief Services

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

Mercy Corps International

World Vision Relief and Development

Citizen Exchange

Mercy Corps International

Cooperatives

American Friends Service Committee

Education/Training

American Friends Service Committee

American Red Cross

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

Mercy Corps International

Health Care

American Red Cross

Material Aid

Adventist Development and Relief Agency

American Friends Service Committee

American Red Cross

Catholic Relief Service

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

Church World Services

Latter-Day Saint Charities

Lutheran World Relief

Mercy Corps International

United Methodist Committee on Relief

World Vision Relief and Development

Nutrition

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

Humanitarian Situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

North Korea has experienced a persistent famine of substantial severity since the mid 1990s. Recurrent natural disasters, including floods and droughts, have devastated agricultural production already in decline. The general depression in the North Korean economy since the end of the Cold War basically is responsible for the acute food security situation. Never self-sufficient in food production, and with its land exhausted by poor cultivation practices the nation has lacked the foreign exchange needed to import food, agricultural inputs, and medicines. Aid and trade cut-backs on the part of traditional economic partners Russia and China were major contributors to North Korea's mounting economic problems. Consequent shortages in fuel, electricity, and chemicals have severely undercut industrial production and exports. Despite an improved harvest in 1998, the World Food Program estimated that 1.05 million tons of food grain assistance will be needed to meet the population's minimum nutritional requirements in 1999. In May 1999, the government announced that drought again would decrease agricultural production.

The authoritarian nature of the regime, long-standing suspicion of foreigners, and an official policy of self-reliance make North Korea a very difficult working environment for humanitarian agencies. All contacts with both government officials and the public are monitored. A substantial portion of the country is out-of-bounds. Americans are particularly suspect, due in part to the presence of 37,000 U.S. troops in South Korea and to the state of war technically still in effect between the DPRK and the nations it confronted during the Korean War. American NGOs are unable to maintain a permanent presence in the country and therefore coordinate their activities at the monthly meetings of InterAction's NGO Working Group on North Korea, which are held in Washington.

However, since NGO assistance was initiated in 1995, access to the public has improved. The World Food Program has been able to open five offices throughout the country. A consortium of American NGOs has been given permission to monitor a portion of U.S. food assistance, spending up to five months at a time in the country for this purpose. In 1998, international agencies were able to conduct a nutritional survey. It left little doubt regarding the gravity of the food crisis. NGOs and international agencies consider their access to food distribution centers and food aid recipients sufficient to feel confident that food aid is not being diverted by the government to the military or other ineligible recipients. Whether all those needing food aid are receiving it is an unanswered question.

Severe malnutrition, especially among young children, has been of even greater concern for the international humanitarian community following the nutrition survey conducted by WFP, UNICEF and the EU in September 1998. A high level of stunting and increased incidences of diarrheal diseases were found. The DPRK's weak public health system, unsafe water supply, and poor sanitation conditions, have led to the re-emergence of previously controlled diseases and has exacerbated the poor state of health. Refugees crossing into China now describe a nation of crumbling towns, and families which must resort to eating grasses and other barely digestible substances. There have also been reports that North Korean women and girls are being traded for food and money.

In April 1999, the US government announced that it would initiate its first program of direct bilateral aid to North Korea, channeling 100,000 MT of food aid through an expanded consortium of American NGOs. For their part, American NGOs have agreed to finance from their own resources a potato seed initiative intended to expand and improve the quality of North Korean potato production. In May 1999, InterAction sponsored an NGO Conference on North Korea in Beijing, which was attended by NGOs from America, South Korea, Europe and Japan.

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Adventist Development and Relief Association (ADRA) seeks to assist the starving people in North Korea, especially women and children, through the provision of general humanitarian relief supplies, including food and medicine. ADRA shipped more than 5 million PowerBites, 65,000 pounds of radish seeds, and 306,000 meals (four cereal biscuits

each) of Weet-Bix, (Australia's most popular breakfast cereal) to North Korea in 1997-98. Since 1995, ADRA has shipped more than US\$4.3 million worth of food aid to the famine-stricken country.

ADRA works with the World Food Programme and its Food Aid Liaison Unit. The agency is currently conducting a special appeal for the people in DPRK and considering future relief efforts.

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American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) aims to provide emergency and development relief and to promote a better understanding of the humanitarian situation in the DPRK by contributing to an open dialogue among non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Northeast Asia and the US. Since 1995, AFSC's contributions to relief food shipments have totaled \$335,000. It continues to provide relief food, blankets and children's winter clothing donated through Caritas Hong Kong, WFP/FALU, and UNICEF.

AFSC focuses its efforts to modernize and increase agricultural production in the DPRK. In coordination with the North Korean Academy of Agricultural Services (AAS), AFSC sponsored three 16 day study-tours for 3 to 4 North Korean delegates to visit US agricultural universities, farms and research centers. Continuing efforts to support additional study tours in the US and Asia are in effect. In 1999, AFSC will also provide selected laboratory equipment to the AAS.

Additionally, AFSC is assisting three North Korean cooperative farms comprising a total population of over 16,000. Beginning with support for the Sambong farm in South Pyongan province in 1997, AFSC expanded its assistance in 1999 to the Kajang farm (also in the South Pyongan Province) and to the Kobi farm in the Pyongyang municipality.

Agricultural assistance has included urea and compound fertilizer (1,700 tons in 1999), clear plastic sheeting (over 1 million square meters in 1999) and smaller quantities of herbicide, sprayers, and seed (wheat, corn, potato). AFSC is currently investigating alternate crop rotations and biological sources of nitrogen fertilizer.

Major funding sources include the Mennonite Central Committee, Lutheran World Relief, and Evangelische Zentralstelle Fur Entwicklungshilfe EV.

American Red Cross

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Since September 1995, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Red Cross (DPRK Red Cross) have conducted an emergency operation to assist the vulnerable people in the DPRK. This operation has evolved from an initial focus on food aid and shelter, to a health program focus which addresses the lack of basic drugs needed to treat patients in hospitals and clinics. In 1998 this health program provided essential drugs and associated training to 853 medical institutions in North Pyongan and Chagang provinces. This year, the program is being further developed and extended to provide support in two additional provinces, South Pyongan and Kaesong, adding to a new overall total of 1,692 medical institutions.

The American Red Cross has supported these efforts in previous years through the facilitation of contributions totaling nearly \$275,000 in cash; and in-kind donations of 350 MT of wheat flour; 18,000 liters of vegetable oil; and a shipping container full of first aid supplies. The American Red Cross supports the current operation through the secondment of a medical doctor who works as a health delegate in the Federation/DPRK Red Cross operation.

Now that the health team has reached its full complement of delegates, including one health coordinator and three health delegates, work has focused on familiarization visits to operational areas, planning for the drug distribution in the first three months, and the development of workshops and materials.

Medical kits for the February to April 1999 distribution arrived by air in February. The Red Cross installed large generators in the warehouse to prevent the injectable drugs from freezing and has used three trucks purchased last year to distribute these drug supplies to the medical institutions listed in the table below. This distribution, now nearly complete, has proved to be both economical and efficient.

Provinces	Provincial Hospital	City /County Hospital	Industrial Hospital	Ri- Hospital	Ri- Clinic	Total
N. Pyongan	1	28	18	81	511	639

S. Pyongan	1	24	50	127	519	721
Chagang	8	7	30	170	215	
Kaesong	1	9	3	51	53	117
TOTAL	3	69	78	289	1,253	1,692

PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL - referral hospital for the province (approx 1,000 beds)

COUNTY/CITY HOSPITAL - average 200/300 beds, 30,000 catchment population, referral for the ri hospitals

INDUSTRIAL HOSPITAL - average 200 beds

RI-HOSPITAL - 7-10 beds. 3,000 /5,000 catchment population

CLINIC - no inpatient facility, 1,000/3,000 catchment population.

Monitoring of the delivery of drugs to the county storage warehouses has been carried out by Federation/DPRK Red Cross health teams in all but two counties of the 48 counties in the Red Cross operational area which were inaccessible due to adverse weather and treacherous road conditions. The next stage of monitoring, evaluating the rational use of drugs in the different levels of medical institutions and collecting quantitative and qualitative information, has already begun.

Forms for drug impact assessment were finalized and approved by the Ministry of Health. This surveillance began in 4 selected counties in North Pyongan province and 1 county in Chagang province in early 1999. Information is being collected from 5 county hospitals, 5 ri hospitals and 5 ri clinics in the 5 counties.

A plan for training and workshops for the remainder of the year, based on information collected from medical staff last year, has been finalized by the Federation/DPRK Red Cross health team. The training will cover topics such as safe motherhood, the rational use of drugs and antibiotics, diarrhea and treatment of other ailments.

Training on the use of drugs and antibiotics in the two new provinces took place in March and April of 1999. The other training sessions and workshops have been planned to coincide with the seasonal occurrence of certain ailments. For example, respiratory ailments training will take place between August and November 1999.

In cooperation with WHO and UNICEF, the Federation has coordinated the updating of a national drugs manual providing comprehensive details on all the drugs found in the kits: 2,500 copies are being distributed to medical institutions in the Red Cross operational areas.

CARE

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Isam Ghanim
Regional Director
Asia (US based)
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In 1995 and 1996 a string of natural disasters and crop failures, combined with a collapsing economy, brought the DPRK to the brink of a devastating famine. The crisis elicited an outpouring of humanitarian assistance from the international community. In 1997, CARE as a lead member of a PVO Consortium developed a combined advocacy and program strategy to alleviate human suffering in a country which could destabilize the entire region. CARE advocated for substantial US Government humanitarian support to the DPRK. For CARE, the humanitarian imperative superceded the political differences that exist between this politically isolated country and the rest of the world.

CARE's advocacy strategy stressed the need for nutritional support to the most vulnerable - children, pregnant and lactating mothers, and the elderly, irrespective of the political regime they fall under. The humanitarian imperative supercedes the political differences that exist between this politically isolated country and the rest of the world.

In collaboration with the five-member consortium, CARE established a temporary presence throughout last year – the first time that Americans have been allowed to stay in the DPRK beyond short-term visits. The staff's reports were clear. The people of DPRK were desperate for food and that the combination of natural disasters and structural flaws in the command economy had brought the entire agriculture and manufacturing sectors to a stand still causing widespread unemployment.

In response to the food crisis and lack of medicines, CARE and the PVO Consortium monitored a general food distribution to women, children and the elderly, medical supply distribution to hospitals and a food for work program in close coordination with the UN.

1. General food distribution - monitored 50,000 MT food distribution to children and elderly.

Medical supply distribution - monitored distribution of medicines, equipment and high protein supplements to 40 children centers, 1,400 hospitals and 3,600 nurseries.

Food for Work - monitored 150,000 MT of food for distribution and progress of FFW projects for over 1.5 million workers

CARE and members of the Consortium are currently preparing to implement a one year food and agriculture program that will help meet both the short and medium term food security needs through implementation of a 100,000 metric ton food for work program and a 1,000 metric ton pilot potato production project. This is a small but significant step toward meeting longer term development needs in the DPR Korea.

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Catholic Relief Services (CRS), a member organization of Caritas Internationalis (CI), has provided assistance to the DPRK via CI member agencies located in Asia since Autumn, 1995. In 1995 and 1996, CRS supported the food assistance programs of Caritas Hong Kong, by providing \$86,195 for the purchase of corn/soya blend and rice. In 1997, CRS contributed \$60,000 to the relief efforts of Caritas Japan, as well as for the purchase of rice. CRS contributions to the Caritas network now amount to more than \$675,000. The most recent donation, a \$300,000 commitment to Caritas Hong Kong, is dedicated to the provision of oil, pulses, cereals and fertilizer. Caritas Hong Kong works in conjunction with the DPRK's Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee and coordinates with the World Food Program's Food Aid Liaison Unit for the purposes of monitoring and accountability.

Building on its experience distributing emergency relief assistance provided by the American government, CRS provided the Team Leader to a consortium of 5 American PVOs (CRS, CARE, World Vision, Mercy Corps and Amigos Internacionales) that monitored 55,000 metric tons of maize donated to North Korea by the United States through the World Food Program from August to November 1997. Subsequent CRS interventions have also taken place with the PVO Consortium to manage USG-donated commodities under the WFP umbrella. A food-for-work project that distributed 75,000 metric tons of maize in five North Korean provinces was completed in October 1998. The most recent project again takes the form of food for work and is currently operational. Eight staff, including two CRS representatives from Maryknoll, will manage the distribution of another 75,000 metric tons of US-donated wheat in six provinces through July 1999.

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Delegation Leader

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) has participated in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank's response to North Korea since the latter first learned about the emerging food deficit in that country in the Fall of 1995. For the past three years, CRWRC has contributed 44,000 metric tons of food aid to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The Committee's 1998/2000 objectives are to provide C\$3.5 million in cooking oil.

CRWC has become increasingly concerned about the level of severe and chronic malnutrition in the DPRK following the WFP/UNICEF/ECHO nutritional survey conducted in September, 1998. Accordingly, it has targeted children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years, as well as older children and adolescents who are now showing signs of extreme malnutrition. It also seeks to improve food security by increasing production through double cropping of winter wheat, barley and vegetables to add to the main rice/maize crops. CRWC provides technical training appropriate to the needs of North Koreans which it views as a major step toward reducing isolation, an underlying cause of food insecurity in this area.

In addition to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, CRWC works in cooperation with the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, and the WFP's Food Aid Liaison Unit.

Church World Services

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Church World Services (CWS) serves as the coordinating agency for the World Food Programme's Food Aid Liaison Unit (FALU). In 1999, it hopes to provide over \$12,000 in canned beef, \$250,000 in blankets, \$250,000 in medicine, in addition to financial support totaling \$500,000 for FALU activities.

CWS cooperates with the Korean Christian Federation, and other international NGOs in the WFP-FALU network. It receives its funding support through contributions from member denominations and individual donations.

Latter-Day Saint Charities

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Latter-day Saint Charities is currently providing relief materials to North Korea including 3,365 tons of basic food items, 50 tons of first aid materials and blankets for public clinic and hospital use, and 53 tons of cold weather clothing. It shipped 1,842 tons of fertilizer, insecticide, and seeds, for immediate cropping and is in the process of developing a longer term agricultural program so as to enhance production capacity.

Food relief has been delivered to World Food Program, DPRK Red Cross, and the DPRK Flood Rehabilitation Committee. Medical materials have been consigned to DPRK Red Cross, and agricultural inputs have been consigned to the Agricultural Commission and to the Daechong and other communal farms.

Latter-day Saint Charities is funded by donations of members and friends of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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Lutheran World Relief (LWR) seeks to alleviate immediate human suffering in a manner that decreases future vulnerability. In early 1998, LWR provided \$25,000 to Mercy Corps International's winter barley seed project. In September, it provided \$20,000 to the winter wheat double crop project. It also provided \$20,000 to AFSCs Sambong Farm Program for improving food production. In 1997, LWR offered partial funding of \$5000 to the first year of the World Food Program's food aid monitoring office.

Other activities in 1997 and 1998 included the shipment of 25 tons of clothing, including sweaters and overcoats, 42,000 quilts for a UNICEF distribution, and 14,000 quilts for a CARE distribution. The monetary value of these distributions was \$918,000.

All Lutheran World Relief funds for the DPRK are received from private donors.

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Mercy Corps has played a lead role in providing humanitarian aid to North Korea since 1996. Its goal is to help to avert widespread famine and starvation while laying the foundation for prevention of future food emergencies. In this regard, Mercy Corps' North Korea efforts include medical and food provision, support for agricultural development, promotion of education/advocacy and increased visitor exchange programs between the DPRK and the United States.

Mercy Corp shipped over \$7.5 million worth of critically needed medicines and medical supplies to UNICEF-Pyongyang, Rajin-Sonbong, and hospitals in Chongjin and Sariwon cities. It shipped 120 MT of rice and 40 MT of milled flour, and provided food and hygiene kits to more than 10,000 people along the China/Korea border.

In regards to agricultural development and food security, Mercy Corps shipped 140 MT of seeds to North Korea, including barley, corn, soybean and green beans. Yields from these seeds were estimated to feed approximately 700,000 people. It developed a comprehensive proposal to introduce double cropping of barley seeds. It also organized a multi-year integrated farm project beginning in 1997 providing necessary seeds, fertilizer, insecticide and fruit trees valued at over \$215,000. The Daechong Cooperative Farm, located in flood-damaged Unpa County, demonstrates methods to increase food production and promote food security.

Mercy Corps chairs the U.S. PVO Food Aid Consortium, which includes Amigos Internacionales, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Mercy Corps, and World Vision. In 1997 and 1998, the PVO Consortium distributed and monitored a total of 130,000 MT of U.S. food aid to North Korea through Food For Work projects. Currently, the PVO Consortium is monitoring a third phase of U.S. food aid. The Consortium has an eight-person team in country for five months to monitor 75,000 MT of wheat. Additionally, the PVO Consortium sent medical personnel to monitor health conditions and the distribution of \$5 million worth of U.S. medical supplies in February 1998.

Mercy Corps organized the InterAction Agricultural Working Group to coordinate efforts of NGOs with longer-term agricultural interests in North Korea. The group's first collaborative project in February 1998 sent 630 MT of barley seed along with appropriate fertilizer, pesticides and sprayers to North Korea. The group's second project sent 305 MT of winter wheat seed in September 1998.

It also organized an eight-city U.S. tour in April 1998 for the Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC) of North Korea. The tour was sponsored by 12 U.S. PVOs to increase mutual understanding between the DPRK and the U.S. It also participated in establishing and funding the Food Aid Liaison Unit within the World Food Programme in Pyongyang to coordinate NGO relief efforts and monitor food shipments.

Mercy Corps convened a national conference on humanitarian aid to North Korea Musgrove II in October 1998 as a follow up to Musgrove I held in December 1996. These two conferences brought together people from the NGO/PVO, donor and United States government (USG) communities to develop and evaluate strategies for managing the humanitarian crisis in the DPRK. MCI co-convened an international conference in Seoul in 1997 to open dialogue

between South Korean NGOs, international NGOs and UN groups to catalyze collaborative efforts for immediate food aid to North Korea. Mercy Corps has assisted in creating Korean Americans for Global Action (KAFGA), an organization to mobilize second generation Korean Americans. Finally, Ellis Culver, Mercy Corps' Senior Vice President, has lead 11 missions since July 1996 to assess damages and needs, monitor projects, discuss longer-term agricultural projects, negotiate increased monitoring of food shipments, and increase delegations to and from North Korea. These visits have resulted in increased aid to North Korea from a wide variety of sources.

United Methodist Committee on Relief

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United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) aims to bring relief to the DPRK and help with that country's recovery, rehabilitation, and development. UMCOR has provided material assistance including fourteen containers of food and non-food items to the DPRK. Non-food items include blankets, water, pharmaceuticals, clothing, seeds and fertilizer. Eight additional containers are scheduled to leave in mid 1999 and most relief assistance is targeted in the Pyongyang area.

UMCOR works with partner agencies including the World Food Program and the Korean Christian Federation.

World Vision Relief and Development

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World Vision Relief and Development (WVRD) has addressed three immediate needs in its DPRK programming in response to the severe food shortages and widespread prevalence of malnutrition and disease: 1) To provide food aid to save lives and prevent long-term damage in children's health; 2) To support agricultural recovery and adjustment so that minimum food requirements can be met through domestic agricultural production; 3) To rehabilitate the industrial sector and increase economic interaction with the rest of the world.

Between 1995 and 1997, WVRD provided \$5.5 million worth of food and medicines, agricultural supplies, and clothing to North Koreans both directly and through the World Food Programme. WVRD has shipped 4,000 tons in emergency food aid to students and elderly in Hamhung City in the South Hamgyong Province. 1200 tons (\$1.2 million) were projected to arrive in January 1999. It has targeted children as well, delivering clothing, blankets, diaper materials, vitamins and food to the 12 provincial baby orphanages throughout the country.

WVRD has also provided a continuous supply of flour and technical support to six noodle making projects, producing and distributing 60,000 meals each day to children and elderly in nearby nurseries, hospitals and feeding stations. The projects take place around the country in particularly needy areas in south and north Pyongan Provinces, Kangwon Province, and South Hamgyong Province.

In 1998, WVRD provided critical production inputs including fertilizer, crop protection chemicals, tractor tires, and greenhouse plastic to farmers on four large cooperative farms in Kaechon and Kandong County enabling them to increase harvests of rice and maize by 2 MT. per hectare, or a total of over 12,000 tons of additional food. WVRD gave seeds and fertilizer for planting a double crop of spring barley on 2,000 hectares of other land which yielded approximately 7,000 additional MT of cereals. WVRD also provided winter work clothing to farmers estimated at (\$1.6 million). It proposes to expand its agricultural assistance by adding three new farms and offering support for solving on-farm food security problems through expanded double cropping, introducing new crop varieties, new farming practices, and providing dairy goats and simple greenhouses.

WVRD proposes to support the Korean Academy of Agricultural Sciences to import, test and disseminate high-yielding varieties of canola and sunflower oil in order to address the shortage of edible oils in the country. The project includes essential laboratory equipment and overseas training for Korean scientists.

World Vision Relief and Development operates in North Korea under an agreement with the Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee. There are separate memoranda of agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Food Administration and the Academy of Agricultural Sciences. A WVRD international representative is based in Pyongyang and technical staff visit the country almost monthly to plan and monitor aid delivery programs. WVRD coordinates closely with UN agencies operating in North Korea, including OCHA, WFP, UNDP, FAO, and UNICEF.

Primary country:

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